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Watch the Paul Jablonski tribute video on Dropbox

San Diego – Former San Diego Metropolitan Transit System CEO Paul Jablonski, who suddenly passed away earlier this year at the age of 67, has been inducted to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Hall of Fame for his extraordinary contributions to public transportation, his dedication to advancing the industry, and outstanding leadership over a 40-year long career.

This award is the national association's highest honor dedicated to recognize individuals who have long and distinguished careers in the transportation industry. During Mr. Jablonski's last 16 years, he completely transformed MTS into an efficient multi-modal public transit provider with one the best state-of-good-repair records in the country.

"A steady theme throughout Paul's career was about contributing to the advancement of transit in the United States and around the world," said Paul P. Skoutelas, APTA President & CEO. "Paul had a team-first collaborative nature. Paul and his contributions moving our industry forward will be deeply missed, but he has helped us forge a promising path that other transit leaders can follow into the future."

In 2009, only four years into his role as CEO at MTS, the agency was awarded Outstanding Large System of the Year becoming the first transportation agency in the country to ever score the highest in every quantitative measure. Mr. Jablonski was also recognized by APTA as the Outstanding Transportation Manager of the Year in 2014.

"Paul had a unique ability to have real clarity and precise vision about what we needed to do as a transit agency," said Nathan Fletcher, MTS Board Chair and San Diego County Supervisor. "He built a culture of professionalism and execution at MTS. He's the reason MTS is such a great agency now. I'd like to thank APTA for recognizing Paul as a 2021 Hall of Fame recipient. It's a befitting award that comes from an organization Paul sincerely admired."

While at the MTS helm, Mr. Jablonski's most notable accomplishments included:

- Set back-to-back annual ridership records in 2014 and 2015
- Oversaw the \$660 million Trolley Renewal Project to revitalize the entire system
- Reorganization and consolidation of the bus and Trolley divisions under the MTS umbrella
- Four consecutive perfect scores during MTS' Triennial Review with the Federal Transit Administration

- Led the redesign of the entire bus network through a Comprehensive Operational Analysis
- Launched a new network of Rapid bus service
- Helped ensure a Full-Funding Grant Agreement for the \$2.1 billion extension of the Trolley.
- Led the creation of a safety-first culture that resulted in three Safety Excellence Awards by APTA in 2015, 2017 and 2018
- Led APTA's TCRP Oversight and Project Selection
- Led the agency's green fleet goals by transitioning its bus fleet to mostly compressed natural gas and implementing a zero-emission bus pilot program

Mr. Jablonski, who began his career as a bus driver, held many positions throughout the years including serving on the APTA Executive Committee and as Chair of the California Transit Association's Executive Committee, a position in which he led efforts to restore state funding for all California transit agencies in the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession.

Before his death on May 10, 2020, he had been leading MTS through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. His leadership, vision and values laid the groundwork for the agency's recovery; a legacy that is now being continued by his successor, Sharon Cooney.

APTA's foundation has set up the Paul Jablonski Scholarship to help deserving students and transit professionals further their education. Donations can be accepted [here](#).

MTS continues to operate about 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines. Frequencies and spans have been restored to near-pre-COVID-19 levels. Updated schedules can be accessed on the [MTS website](#). MTS asks that that people wear face coverings at all times and practice physical distancing when possible.

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